

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-10, 13-20 and 22-25 are pending.

Claims 1, 4-10, 13-20 and 22-26 were rejected.

Claims 2, 3, 11, 12, 21, and 26 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Drawings filed on March 21, 2001 are objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claims in view of the following amendments and remarks.

Interview Summary

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his time for the telephone interview that was conducted between the Examiner and Applicant's representative, Brian Wichner, on April 18, 2006. During the interview, there were two issues discussed. First issue regarded the drawing objections. The second issue regarded the claim rejections in view of Kadomura et al ("Kadomura").

We pointed to the support in the Specification for the "low annular wall". The Examiner was then persuaded that the claims are supported by the drawings and he will remove the rejection. He noted, however, that the difficulty originally arose because the claims recite "annular low wall" while the Specification describes a "low annular wall". The Examiner requests that we choose one transposition or the other throughout the claims and Specification. We suggest "low annular wall".

Discussing the next issue, the Examiner agrees that Kadomura provides a ceramic layer by flame spraying or brazing. But the Examiner maintains that Kadomura reads on the claims because the claim language is too ambiguous or misleading by using the term "but not *fastened* thereto" and "whereby said ceramic plate can be *easily* placed on and removed". Specifically, the verb "fastened" implies a mechanical connection or fixing. So the limitation in the claim can be interpreted broadly as a ceramic plate not mechanically connected (but flame spraying or direct connection is not excluded).

The conditional limitation, according to the Examiner, that the ceramic plate can be *easily* placed on and removed is a problem because the term "easily" is indefinite. According to the Examiner, this clause lends to a relative interpretation. He particularly stated, "What is an easy process for one may not be easy for another."

Thus, the Examiner suggested that some language of the claims can be changed to better convey the embodiments of the invention.

Drawings

As discussed above, regarding the Examiner Interview, applicant has amended the claims to be consistent with the language of the Specification. Namely, “annular low wall” has been amended to “low annular wall”. Thus, the drawings show every feature of the invention specified in the claims.

Claim Rejections- 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 4-7, 9, 13-16, 19, 20 and 22-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP11-121598, Kadomura et al. (“Kadomura”), in view of US Patent No. 5,800,618 A, Niori; Yusuke et al. (“Niori”).

Claims 8, 10, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP11-121598, Kadomura et al. (“Kadomura”), in view of US Patent No. 5,094,885 A, Selbrede; Steven C. (“Selbrede”).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

Applicant points out that Kadomura has a US counterpart, U.S. Patent No. 6,391,437, to which below references refer.

All independent claims 1, 5, 9, 14, 20, and 22 have been amended to include the limitation that a ceramic plate having a substantially horizontal planar lower surface conforming to and supported by said heating surface is not physically or mechanically fixed thereto. Support for this limitation can be found in the Specification, for example, on page 4, line 23.

The Examiner describes Kadomura’s ceramics layer 13 as if it were comparable to the ceramic plate of the claims, not being fastened to the heating surface 12, among other things. But in view of the claim amendments described above, the ceramics layer 13 may only be comparable to the ceramic plate of the claims if it were not physically or mechanically fixed to the heating surface 12, among other things.

Kadomura’s ceramic layer 13 is, however, provided on the surface of the matrix 12 by a flame spraying method or brazing (col. 17, lines 43-45). By the very nature of these processes, the ceramics layer 13 *is physically and mechanically fixed* to the heating surface 12, contrary to the requirements of claims 1, 5, 9, 14, 20, and 22. Kadomura does not,

therefore, teach a ceramic plate that is not physically or mechanically fixed to a heating surface.

Niori fails to makeup for the Kadomura's shortcomings. Thus the combination of these references fails to teach or anticipate all of the limitations of claims 1, 5, 9, 14, 20, and 22.

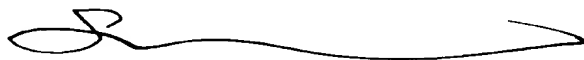
Additionally, claims 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15-19, and 23-25 depend from claims 1, 5, 9, and 22, respectively, and inherently include all of the limitations of their base claims. As discussed above, the prior art does not teach the limitations of their base claim much less the further embodiments of the dependent claims. Therefore, these claims are allowable for their dependency and their own merits. Allowance of these claims is requested.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of the claims of the application as amended is solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

MARGER JOHNSON & McCOLLOM, P.C.



Hosoon Lee
Reg. No. 56,737

MARGER JOHNSON & McCOLLOM, P.C.
210 SW Morrison Street, Suite 400
Portland, OR 97204
503-222-3613

Customer No. 20575

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Date: May 11, 2006


Natasha French